THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Additional Bench of the Income-tax Settlement Commission, Bombay with whom the settlement application is pending for admission have fixed the hearing in January, 1990 (23|01|1990) The recovery of tax dues will be made after finalisation of proceedings under the Income-tax Act.

Vacancies in Supreme Court and High Courts

406. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA:
SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies existing in the Supreme Court at present;

(b) by when they are likely to be filled in view of the heavy pressure of work in the Supreme Court; and

(c) what concrete proposals are under way to obviate the delay in future appointments to the Supreme Court and other High Courts?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) As on 25-12-89, there were 4 vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court.

(b) Appointments of two Judges in the Supreme Court have been notified on 26-12-89. Appointments of one more Judge has been finalised. Steps to fill the remaining vacancy have been taken.

(c) The process of consultation with the concerned constitutional authorities for appointments to the High Courts and the Supreme Court will be carried out more expeditiously and effectively.

Relief for middle and fixed income groups in tax structure

407. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give relief to the middle and fixed income groups in tax structure;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what other steps would be taken to relieve these groups from the burden of mounting inflation?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) to (c): Numerous representations have been received from various quarters, suggesting increase in the income limit for tax purposes to mitigate the hardship caused to the middle and fixed income groups on account of mounting inflation.

The suggestion made in the various representations will be considered during the budgetary exercises for the Budget 1990-91. The decision of the Government will be reflected in the Finance Bill, 1990 which will be introduced in the Parliament during its Budget Session.

Strengthening of agriculture and horticulture processing industries

408. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to strengthen the processing of agricultural and horticultural produce rather than fancy projects like colas and aerated water projects;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether Government keep employment potential as an overriding consideration for expanding food processing industries; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (d) A number of steps have been taken by Government to ac-

celerate the growth of food processing industries which include industries for processing of agricultural and horticultural produce. Some of the principal steps include the placing of these industries in Appendix-I List of Industries, broad banding of the scheduled industries under items 27(1) and 27(5) of the First Sche. to the Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, concessions granted during the budget of 1989-90, etc.

One of the objectives of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries is creation of increased job opportunities in the rural areas through the setting up of agro-based industries.

Setting up of export processing zone at Visakhapatnam

409. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have so far been taken for the setting up of an Export Processing Zone at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) what is the time-frame for completing the project?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM (SHRI ARUN KUMAR NEHRU): (a) The setting up of Visakhapatnam Export Processing Zone has been approved by the Government of India and was notified on 15-3-1989. The Central Government has also released part payment to the State Government towards the cost of land for he Zone. Orders relating to the transfer of 407.82 acres of Government land in Jaggarajupeta and Narava Villages of Gajuwaka Mandal of Visakhapatnam District to the Central Government has been issued by the State Government on 30-6-1989. The Development Commissioner for the Zone has also been appointed.

(b) The basic infrastructure for the Zone is likely to be completed in two years. However, applications for setting up of units in the Zone would be entertained during the next financial ytar.

White paper on Indian Economy

410. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to bring out a White Paper on Indian economy;

(b) if so, whether it would also cover the period of the earlier Janata Rule from 1977—80; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) Government requested Economy Advisory Council to prepare a paper which has been circulated.

(b) Economy Advisory Council paper focuses on the current economic situation.

(c) Does not arise.

Siphoning off foreign exchange under OGL scheme

411. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of reports that the provisions of OGL Scheme have been exploited to siphon off foreign exchange; and

(b) if so, what is the estimated loss of foreign exchange and also the details of companies responsible for the same?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) and (b) It is not possible to estimate loss of foreign exchange by misuse of the facility of importing goods under OGL Scheme. The details of cases detected during the year 1989 are, however, being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.